DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 100 430 JC 750 059

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| TITLE | Expectations of Garland [Junior College]. |
| INSTITUTION | Garland Junior Coll., Boston, Mass. |
| PUB DATE | Oct 74 |
| NOTE | 7p. |
| EDRS PRICE | MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Expectation; *Females; *Junior Colleges; *Parent Attitudes; Private Colleges; Student College Relationship; *Student Opinion; Surveys; Vocational Education |
| IDENTIFIERS | Garland Junior College; Massachusetts |

ABSTRACT

A survey was conducted at Garland Junior College to determine the educational expectations of 69 new students, 122 parents, and 22 college faculty and administrators. Each group in this private women's college was asked to rank, in terms of expectations they held, the following items: learn job skills, mature in relations with others, become more sure of self, clarify goals and values, and become a better student. While parents of resident students were concerned that their daughters clarify goals, parents of commuter students ranked job skills highest. Entering students in general also ranked job skills first and becoming a better student last. In answer to the request for comments, parents showed concern for their daughters' personal growth, students expected career preparation, and staff concentrated their comments on implementation of these goals. (Author)

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# EXPECTATIONS

# OF

# GARLAND

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October, 1974

JC 750 059

# EXPECTATIONS OF GARLAND

Each fall new students arrive at Garland with hopes and expectations of what their college experience will mean to them. Parents, too, hold a set of expectations, as do faculty and administrators. What do they all hope will happen as the year progresses? And do their hopes and expectations differ? We felt that answers to these questions would provide one basis for evaluating the effectiveness of our educational program. We felt also the answers would be helpful in assessing our approach to prospective students through admissions and publications.

## Expectations Study

This fall, we asked parents of new students, new students themselves, and faculty and staff to complete a brief Expectations Questionnaire during Orientation Week. Responses were obtained from 122 parents, 69 students, and 22 faculty and administrators. While the questionnaire asked broad identifying information, respondents were told they need not give their names unless they wished to do so. Each group was asked to rank, in terms of expectations they held, the following items:

learn job skills
mature in relations with others
become more sure of self
clarify goals and values
become a better student

other (please explain)

In addition, spaces were provided for a free response in which the student, parent, or staff member was asked to tell, in his or her own words, "in what ways you hope you (or your daughter or new student) will benefit from experiences at Garland this year, and how you (or your daughter, new student) feel the College can best help you achieve your goals."

## Some Results of the Study

A summary of Questionnaire responses follows:

1. How the Items Were Ranked

In general, parents gave highest rank to the item, "clarify goals and values", and lowest rank to "become a better student". There were, however, some interesting differences in expectations, depending on whether their daughter was a resident or commuting student, and on her field of study. While parents of resident students were most concerned that their daughters "clarify goals and values", parents of commuter students gave "learn job skills" top ranking. Parents of daughters enrolling in the Business/Secretarial Division, on the other hand, were most concerned that their daughters acquire job skills. That parents of students in the Foods program gave this item the lowest rating leads us to question whether the Foods program is perceived by parents, at least, as a collegiate version of learning to cook rather than as the rigorous semi-professional program it has become?

Entering students in general also gave top rank to "learn job skills", with "clarify goals and values" in the number two position and "becoming a better student" last. Transfers from other colleges rated most highly among their expectations, "becoming more sure of self". Resident students were most hopeful that they would "become more sure of self", and "clarify goals and values", as compared with commuter students who hoped most to "learn job skills" and "mature in relations to others".

New students enrolled in Foods, in contrast with their parents, hoped most to "learn job skills", as did students in the Business/Secretarial Division. Younger students (aged 17 - 20) were most concerned with acquiring job skills, as compared to older students who gave this item a lower rating.

Overall ranking of the items by parents of new students, new students, and professional staff are summarized below:

Overall Ranking of Items

| | New Parents | New Students | Faculty/ Administration |
|---|---|---|---|
| Learn job skills | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Mature in relations with others | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Become more sure of self | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Clarify goals and values | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Become a better student | 5 | 5 | 5 |

With the exception of Foods majors, there was considerable agreement between new students and their parents, regarding their hopes and expectations of the College. Some interesting differences by major field of study are evident in the data below.

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Ranking By Major Field of Study

| | Art | | Early Childhood Education | | Gen Home Economics | | Fashion Merchan. | | Foods | | Sec'y 2 yr. | | Sec'y 1 yr. | | SP 75 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Stu. | Par | Stu | Par | Stu | Par | Stu | Par | Stu | Par | Stu | Par | Stu. | Par. | Stu. | Par |
| Learning Job Skills | 3 | 3 | | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Mature in Relations With Others | 4 | 4 | | 5 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| Become More Sure of Self | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Clarify Goals and Values | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| Become a Better Student | 5 | 5 | | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 |

11. Responses to the Open-Ended Question

One hundred eleven parents, forty-four students, and twenty-two staff wrote thoughtful answers in response to our invitation that they express in their own words their expectations and how these could best be achieved.

Parents' Replies

The largest group hoped their daughters would become more independent, mature and responsible; develop initiative; become more self-confident; develop self-esteem; and develop new interests. The next largest group mentioned excellent career preparation in order to get a job in the area of study at Garland and become self-supporting. A variety of other expectations were mentioned: learning to utilize the intellectual and social aspects of Boston; learning to live with others through a group situation; receiving personal attention with the opportunity to develop close relationships with staff; finding Garland's academic program interesting, thorough, and challenging; increasing general knowledge and broadening interests.

Students' Replies

The largest group expected excellent career preparation with the hope that they would be able to get a good job in their field of interest. The next largest group spoke of their hope of becoming more self-confident, developing more self-esteem, becoming more mature, and developing their own potential.

Faculty/Administrators' Replies

Most professional staff concentrated on how they felt they could best help students achieve their goals: by maintaining close relationships with individual students, by understanding students' goals, by helping students build self-esteem and self-confidence, and by making students aware of their environment, their social relationships, and themselves. Others mentioned preparing students to enter the job market; instilling dependability, reliability, and initiative; improving the governance structure of the College and discouraging nurturing relationships; building a solid educational base and making programs more flexible.

## Some Conclusions and Comments

It is clear that both new students and their parents hold high expectations for practical career preparation at Garland. Of great importance, also, especially to resident students and their parents, is the hope that the College will provide opportunities for personal growth - for values clarification, for new interests, for learning to live with others, for developing greater self-esteem and self-confidence.

While faculty and administrators place somewhat more emphasis on these latter expectations and how to attain them, what appears to be a disparity in views may not, in fact, be so. One can argue, for example, that self-esteem and self-confidence are the basis for job success as well as a satisfying life. Recent studies confirm the importance of these qualities for

working women. Job skills and personal growth are inseparable aspects for today's women.

Replies to the questionnaires appear to justify the thrust of Garland's educational program: to offer students experiences which prepare them for satisfying jobs and, at the same time, help them grow as persons. Career emphasis in academic programs, special services such as counseling and placement, and the personal attention staff provide, are ways in which Garland responds to these expectations. Our continuing challenge is to do well what we are already doing.

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